

GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDCHILDREN

- 603 *Veitukani* is the collective term for grandfather and grandchild, *veitumbuni* for grandmother and grandchild. A man honors his grandfather's older brother, whom he designates as *tuka levu* (big grandfather). His attitude toward his real grandfather is one of respectful familiarity. He addresses his grandfather by the respectful term *tukai* or *tua* (which the natives say is a Tongan word) and does not use his personal name. The same terms are used to address his grandfather's younger brother. A man may take the clothes and garden food of his real grandfather without permission and may request his pigs and chickens and the use of his coconut groves. Grandparents indulge grandchildren, taking their part against parents. A man respects his grandmother's older sister, and the polite form of address is *tumbu levu* (big grandmother). For the grandmother and her younger sister, *mbui* is correct. Children call their grandmothers *tutu* or *pupu*. Children spend much time with their grandparents, who lavish attention upon them.

VEIVUNGONI AND VASU

- 604 The collective term *veivungoni* includes the mother's brother and his wife, father's sister and her husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law, son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and the child of one's sibling of the opposite sex. A strict reciprocal avoidance is observed between *veivungoni*. Sexual intercourse is *tabu* between them. They avoid meeting, speaking to one another, and never look at one another. When they are together they keep the head and eyes lowered and avoid saying more than is necessary. The words come slowly and heavily in a trembling voice. Jokes and references to sex are prohibited. A woman does not tell her mother-in-law when she is pregnant nor does she discuss childbirth with her. Her mother-in-law may, however, assist with the delivery, and treat her daughter-in-law if she is ill. Those standing in the *vungo* relationship (p. 57) do not address one another with personal names but use the polite second person plural, *kemundrau*. The polite term of address for mother's older brother and for father's older sister's husband is *mono*, and the polite term for the father's older sister and the mother's older brother's wife is *ngane*. These two terms are used without the possessive suffix. It is *tabu* to curse one's *mono* or *ngane*. *Veivungoni* may enter the same house, eat together, drink in the same kava circle and eat one another's left over food. Although sleeping in the same house is not allowed, it is quite common for a widowed mother-in-law to live in the house of the son-in-law (table 1).

- 604 *Veivungoni* are allowed to take each other's property without asking. This privilege is formalized in the *vasu* relationship which exists between a man and the clan of his mother's brother. A man is the *vasu* of his mother's brother's clan and has, therefore, the privilege of appropriating the clan prop-

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erty without permission. The obligations of the mother's brother regarding the *vasu* are inherited by the mother's clan, so that as long as the *vasu* lives he may exercise *vasu* rights.

The *vasu* rights of a high chief extend to all his mother's people. For instance, the son of the sister of the high chief of Lau may, in the capacity of *vasu*, demand property from all the islands of the Lau group. He is called the great *vasu*, and his demands are a form of tribute.

The first *vasu* ceremony is conducted by the *vasu*'s father when the *vasu* is a child. The father collects mats, tapa, sennit, and whales' teeth from his subclan. This property is called *i yau ni vaka lutulutu*. The father presents it according to the ceremonial presentation pattern (pp. 65-68) to the mother's brother, who accepts it and divides it among the members of his subclan. The ceremony gives the *vasu* the privilege of taking property at any time from the subclan of his mother's brother. He may take food from his uncle's garden and may kill and eat his pigs. Anything he requests according to the soliciting system (p. 207) will be granted. The maternal uncle, on the other hand, has the right to retaliate by taking property from the subclan of his *vasu*. This is called "causing the staff to fall" (*vakambale i titoko*). The privilege is, however, seldom exercised. (Hocart, 15, p. 40.)

The *vasu* relationship is technically a formalized exchange of property with deferred payment and not a one-sided appropriation. The exchange is not reciprocally balanced since eventually the *vasu* receives the larger share of property. It is a form of affinal exchange, one of the series of ceremonial exchanges of property between the paternal and the maternal clans which occur also at marriage, birth, and death. The *vasu* relationship in Lau serves to establish and emphasize a strong tie between a man and his mother's clan in a patrilineal society. Just as through patrilineal descent a man inherits membership with its privileges and obligations in the clan of his father, so through the *vasu* relationship he inherits a definite status accompanied by privileges and obligations in the clan of his mother.

Cross-cousin marriage is consistent with and may be genetically connected with the concept of the *vasu*. A man preferably takes a wife from the clan of his mother. As *vasu* he has the right to demand his mother's brother's daughter. The marriage involves a ceremonial exchange of property between the clan of his father and that of his mother and more closely knits the *vasu* with his mother's clan.

The avoidance observed between *vungu* reaches its highest expression between the *vasu* and his maternal uncle. The tabu between *vungu* are emphasized in the *vasu* relationship, and an attitude of respect is shown on both sides.

The chief of Kambara says that the *vasu* relationship originated in the *vakalutulutu* custom of the early inhabitants. He says that formerly among the

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604 land people the *vasu* did not exist, but that the mother's brother's clan prepared
 606 and assembled property for the sister's son. They then notified the sister's
 618 son, who came and took the property, which was called his share (*vakalutulu*). This suggests that the formal presentation of property between the
 [77] mother's brother and the sister's son is old in Lau. The idea of seizure of
 property may be intrusive from Tonga where it is a part of the *fahu* (*vasu*)
 institution. (Gifford, 9, pp. 22-23.)

SOCIAL CEREMONIAL

554 Social life in Lau conforms to strict rules of etiquette based on rank. The
 576 same pattern of behavior, with variations in degree of elaboration according
 to rank, is used down the whole social scale. Each individual observes the
 main rules of the polite (*vakarokoroko*) etiquette toward persons, whether
 related or not, of higher rank or toward persons who stand in the avoidance
 [86] relationship. The rules are learned by children before the age of seven or
 558 eight, and infringement of them causes a loss of social prestige.

The fine points of chiefly etiquette are known only by high ranking persons who have at some time been members of the chief's court at Tumbou, where social life is most highly formalized.

554 In the presence of the high chief one behaves in the polite manner. No
 576 one is allowed to stand erect. Persons of low rank sit before him cross-legged
 612 with bowed heads. They often tremble with excitement. They are ashamed
 498 and look down at the ground. They crouch or bend low when he passes.
 Persons of low rank rarely speak in the presence of the chief. Respect is
 shown by silence. Joking is forbidden. A special phraseology, called polite
 speech (*vosa vakarokoroko*) is used in the chief's presence. This phraseology
 is in the Mbauan dialect and consists mainly of metaphors employed instead of
 the usual terms for parts of the body, actions, property, and personal relationship.
 [81] Polite speech is used mainly on Lakemba. It is rarely heard in
 southern Lau and few natives know it. (Hocart, 15, pp. 46-49.)

689 The chiefly greeting (*tama*) consists of the exclamation, "O . . . oa!" All
 chiefly ceremonial is in the polite speech. Formerly infringement of chiefly
 etiquette in the presence of the chief was punished by clubbing or death, depending upon the rank of the chief and upon the offense. A simplified form of
 chiefly etiquette is used in the presence of minor chiefs and relatives who stand
 in the respect relationship.

554 Guests visiting a man's house observe definite rules of etiquette. No one
 576 except the owner is allowed to sit on the foundation mound or the door sill
 of the house. The interior of the house is divided into three parts. The lower
 end of the house (*sue*), extending from the main entrance (*katumba i sue* or
katumba kumba i ra) to the first supporting posts, is public. The middle of
 the house (*mbuto ni vale*), the main section between the supporting posts, is

585 exchange native dances and the old people drink kava. Late in the evening all the guests leave the house except the young couple and frequently three or four old female relatives of the bridegroom, including his mother, grandmother, and paternal aunt who remain for the "virginity test". They sleep in the house with the young couple to find out whether or not the bride is a virgin.

If the results of the test are satisfactory the old women announce the glad news to the village by shouting and dancing, and the village drums are beaten. To celebrate the occasion a large feast is prepared by the young man's relatives. A pig is killed and the body openings such as the snout, eyes, ears, and anus are frequently covered with banana leaves as a symbol of virginity. If the signs of virginity are not produced the groom's relatives are angry and the girl's relatives are very much ashamed. In this case only a very small feast is prepared by the man's side.

585 If the girl is wearing "virgin locks" they are cut on the
302 day after the wedding. Both clans assemble in the young
[614] man's house where his clan presents mats and barkcloth to
the girl's clan. The mats are piled and the barkcloth is placed
[606] on top. The bride sits on the pile and her mother-in-law
singes the locks, or cuts them if a pair of scissors is available.
The hair is usually thrown away, but occasionally the girl
makes it into a necklace.

585 Another ceremony takes place in the man's house on the
day after the wedding. The man's relatives present property
to the girl's relatives. Every morning for four days the relatives of the groom prepare a small breakfast feast for the
[515] young couple. The ritual washing is held for the bride on
the fourth day after the wedding. The bride takes a bath
in the sea for the first time since her wedding. The natives
say that if she bathes in the sea before the fourth day, water
will get into her stomach and make her sick. The bride
goes fishing with her relatives to secure sea-food for the large